

PROPOSAL

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
FLOOD PROTECTION CORRIDOR PROGRAM

Azusa River Wilderness Park -
Cool Water Springs Parcel

SUBMITTED BY:
CITY OF AZUSA
SUZANNE AVILA
RIVER PROJECTS COORDINATOR
FEBRUARY 14, 2003

II. General Information

Project Name: Azusa River Park – Cool Water Springs Parcel

Project Location: 2280 N. San Gabriel Canyon Road
Azusa, California

County: Los Angeles

Name and address of sponsoring agency or non-profit organization:

City of Azusa
213 E. Foothill Blvd
Azusa, CA 91702

Name of Project Manager (contact): Suzanne Avila

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Grant Request Amount: \$2,200,000.00

Project Manager

River Projects Coordinator

Title

Date

Project Objective(s):

The City of Azusa, “The Canyon City”, is proud to submit this project proposal for funding under the Flood Protection Corridor Program. Azusa is a family oriented community of 47,000 working class residents. Nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and adjacent to the Angeles National Forest and the San Gabriel River, Azusa is regionally important in regards to recreation, open space and natural habitat. The mountains and river floodplain corridor provide natural land for a variety of plant and animal habitats to flourish. Recreational opportunities for the growing population of Southern California abound in the San Gabriel Canyon.

The City of Azusa has been working diligently to restore and reconnect with the San Gabriel River. Currently, Azusa is involved in several river restoration projects. These projects include: Extension of the existing San Gabriel River regional bike path, for which 1992 Proposition A funding has already been granted; Landscaping of the San Gabriel Canyon Spreading Basins through a partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works; Rehabilitation of the current USDA Forest Service information center into a River and Mountains Education Center and Gateway Interpretive Park; and this proposal to create a River Wilderness Park which is being supported in part by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). If this proposal is selected, funds will be used to acquire property in the river floodplain with the intent to preserve and enhance wildlife values that are compatible with seasonal flooding. Also, by preserving this property as open space, the river corridor will be protected from any future development.

Azusa is now looking to acquire all contiguous parcels of land along the north end of the San Gabriel River to ultimately form an 88-acre park. This proposal is for acquisition of one parcel, totaling 26.06 acres, adjacent to a 1.8-acre parcel purchased in 2002 with RMC funds. The intent of the City is to have this land and all future acquisitions deeded solely for the purpose of open space, creating a natural environment for wildlife and for residents of Azusa, and residents of all of Los Angeles County to enjoy. The acquisition of river floodplain property to create the Azusa River Wilderness Park will allow the northern section of the San Gabriel River to remain undeveloped and in its natural state. This section of the San Gabriel River is one of the last portions remaining with natural sides and a natural channel bottom. No permits are required for this project, and county tax revenue will not be affected by this project.

Geographical Area Map

Project Site Map

Adjacent Properties Map

Habitat Linkages Map

Photographs (x4)

IV. Flood Protection Benefits

A. Existing and potential urban development in the floodplain (50)

1. Describe the existing and potential urban development at the site and the nature of the flood risk.

The proposed 26.06-acre site is currently in its natural state. A 350 unit residential development, known as Mountain Cove, was approved in 2000 on the adjacent western parcel and construction of homes began in 2001. This residential development is located in the floodplain of the San Gabriel River. The developers were required to construct a retaining wall along the northern stretch of the river, which was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The current property owner/willing seller of the proposed acquisition has offered the City of Azusa a first right of refusal on purchasing the property, however, the real estate broker representing the seller has informed us that he is entertaining offers for residential development. See Project Site Map for FEMA floodplain delineation.

2. How often has flooding occurred historically?

According to the San Gabriel River Water Committee, purveyors of water of the San Gabriel River, floods have occurred historically on average of about every 30 years. Records indicate flood conditions along the San Gabriel in 1884, 1916, 1938, and 1969.

3. Discuss the importance of improving the flood protection at this location. Include the number of people and structures that are affected by the flood hazard, and the flood impacts to highways and roads, railroads, airports and other infrastructure, and agriculture.

By acquiring the proposed 26.06-acre site the City of Azusa will be able to preserve the floodplain corridor and prevent any future development, thus decreasing the effects of flood hazard to people, structures, and roads.

B. Flood damage reduction benefits of the project (100)

1. Does the proposed project provide for transitory storage of floodwaters? What is the total community need for transitory storage related to this water course and what percentage of the total need does this project satisfy? What is the volume of water and how long is it detained?

This project does not provide for transitory storage of floodwaters

2. Describe any structural and non-structural flood damage reduction elements of the project. (Examples of structural elements are levees, weirs, detention/retention basins, rock slope-protection, etc. Examples of non-structural elements are acquisition of property for open space, acquisition of land for flood flow easements, transitory storage, relocation of structures and other flood prone development, elevating flood prone structures, flood proofing structures, etc.)

There are no structural flood damage reduction elements associated with this project. Non-structural flood damage elements are the core of this project. By acquiring the proposed 26.06-acre parcel, the City will restore and preserve the property as open space.

3. By what methods and by how much dollar value will the project decrease expected average annual flood damages?

By acquiring the proposed property, the project decreases flood damages by preserving the floodplain corridor as open space, thus prohibiting future development and future flood damages. Any dollar value associated with the decrease in average annual flood damages would be an estimate, dependant upon various possible future development scenarios. Acquisition of the property prevents an increase in annual flood damages.

4. How does the project affect the hydrologic and hydraulic conditions at the project site and adjacent properties?

a) Will the project reduce the magnitude of a flood flow, which could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

This project proposes to preserve and protect the existing floodplain. The only potential hydrologic and hydraulic effects would be to prevent future modification to the river channel and floodplain that could have detrimental upstream or downstream effects.

b) What are the effects of the project on water surface elevations during a flood event that could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

This project proposes to preserve and protect the existing floodplain. The only potential hydrologic and hydraulic effects would be to prevent future modification to the river channel and floodplain that could have detrimental upstream or downstream effects.

c) How are flood velocities impacted by the project during a flood flow that could cause property damage and/or loss of life?

This project proposes to preserve and protect the existing floodplain. The only potential hydrologic and hydraulic effects would be to prevent future modification to the river channel and floodplain that could have detrimental upstream or downstream effects.

C. Restoration of natural processes (60)

1. Describe how any natural channel processes will be restored (for example: for channel meander, sediment transport, inundation of historic floodplain, etc.) and describe how these natural processes will affect flood management and adjacent properties.

The proposed acquisition parcel contains one of the last natural sections the San Gabriel River. The river runs the length of the property with natural banks and a natural soft channel bottom. Through this acquisition, the river will be preserved in its natural state, with room within the floodplain corridor for the river to meander. Natural water flow is contained by a series of dams located up stream (i.e. Cogswell Dam, San Gabriel Dam, and Morris Dam), which were all constructed in the early 1930s. Sediment transport has also been altered by the creation of the dam system and is now the responsibility of Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW). The historic floodplain was altered by the creation of the dams. Water is no longer running through the river system in a natural state. All water from the San Gabriel River is fully adjudicated and every drop is conserved for public use. DPW operates the dams and controls releases of water with flood protection as their main purpose.

2. Describe any upstream or downstream hydraulic or other effects (such as bank erosion or scour, sediment transport, growth inducement, etc.).

This project proposes to preserve and protect the existing floodplain. Potential hydraulic effects would be to prevent future modification to the river channel and floodplain that could have detrimental upstream or downstream effects.

3. If the project includes channel modification or bank protection work, will riprap or dredging be part of the design? If so, provide an analysis of potential benefits and impacts

There is no channel modification or bank protection work associated with this project.

D. Project effects on the local community (60)

1. How will the project impact future flooding on and off this site?

This project will preserve the flood corridor as wildlife habitat, thus allowing for flooding on site. Development will not be allowed, which will aid in the prevention future flooding impacts.

2. How will the project affect emergency evacuation routes or emergency services and demands for emergency services?

Emergency evacuation routes through the project can be easily determined once acquisition has taken place. By restoring the property as a wildlife corridor, there will be no threat to human life. Emergency services will be able to access and transverse the property to provide services not only to the River Park but also to the entire San Gabriel Canyon. The proposed acquisition sits at the mouth of San Gabriel Canyon, gateway to the Angeles National Forest. According to the USDA Forest Service San Gabriel River Range District, the Angeles National Forest, when compared to other National Forests, sits adjacent to the largest urban area in the entire United States. The Forest Service estimates that over seven million visitors enter the Angeles through San Gabriel Canyon. Should the Angeles National Forest ever experience wildfires such as those that occurred in 2002 (Curve and Williams Fire, burning over 50,000 acres collectively), the Azusa River Park could ultimately serve as a staging area for fire fighting teams and their equipment, thus having a positive effect on emergency services.

3. Explain how the project will comply with the local community floodplain management ordinance and the floodplain management criteria specified in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (FEMA's NFIP).

This project will be preserving the FEMA designated floodplain as open space with limited recreational access.

E. Value of Improvement protected (70)

1. What is the assessed value of structural improvements that will be protected by the project?

There are no structures located within the floodplain corridor.

2. What is the estimated replacement value of any flood control facilities or structures protected by the project?

There are no flood control facilities or structures located within the floodplain corridor.

V. Wildlife and Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits

A. Wildlife Benefits

A1. Importance of the site to regional ecology (70)

1. Describe any habitat linkages, ecotones, corridors or other buffer zones within or adjacent to the site. How are these areas affected by the project?

This site forms a portion of a critical habitat linkage along the San Gabriel River, as described by the California Wilderness Coalition in their 2001 report, *Missing Linkages: Restoring Connectivity to the California Landscape*. This statewide analysis of migratory corridors highlights this corridor as a key to maintaining connectivity between the San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles National Forest and the Santa Ana Mountains/Cleveland National Forest. At a smaller scale, this San Gabriel River corridor is essential to maintaining genetic exchange between the San Gabriel Mountains and large urban habitat patches located downstream. See Habitat Linkages Map.

The site itself plays a critical role in connectivity along the San Gabriel River. The site is located at the narrow eastern entrance of the San Gabriel Canyon in northern Azusa. The San Gabriel Canyon is identified in a year 2000 study, *Reconnecting the San Gabriel Valley: a Planning Approach for the Creation of Urban Wildlife Corridor Networks*, prepared by the California State Polytechnic University Landscape Architecture graduate program for the San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy as a “number one priority for preservation along this wildlife corridor, as these largely undisturbed habitats face a serious threat of imminent and extensive destruction from development.” (Brown, et al, 2000. p.67)

Because of its location at the canyon mouth with the steep canyon walls rising to either side of the site, inappropriate development of this site could severely impact species movement into the canyon. To the north of the canyon, lie the San Gabriel Mountains and Angeles National Forest. To the south of the canyon lie the highly developed San Gabriel Valley and the habitat patches of Santa Fe Dam and Whittier Narrows. Protecting and preserving habitat at this site can help ensure continued species movement between native populations in Angeles National Forest, existing urban habitat patches, and beyond to the Santa Ana Mountains and Cleveland National Forest.

2. Is the site adjacent to any existing conservation areas?

The site lies along the southern edge of the expansive Angeles National Forest. The Pasadena Water Department owns two parcels of adjacent land, which it preserves for water supply quality. A portion of the site itself includes a recently established 14 acre California Department of Fish and Game conservation easement along the San Gabriel River (APN 8684-007-012). A binding agreement is in place to further expand this conservation easement past the site southwest along the river by the year 2005. These

conservation easements and agreements were established as mitigation for a large housing development, Mountain View Residential Development, which is still under construction on the north side of San Gabriel River in San Gabriel Canyon. See Project Site Map.

3. Describe any plans for aquatic restoration resulting in in-stream benefits.

Acquisition of this site is part of a larger plan by the City of Azusa to acquire and preserve parcels at the canyon mouth for the formation of the proposed Azusa Canyon River Park. Once acquisition has been completed, a master plan including extensive restoration will be completed, which could include aquatic restoration as well as terrestrial restoration. The park is envisioned as a largely natural park, with the floodplain preserved and restored for limited, reservation-based wilderness camping. Public park facilities will be located well outside of the floodplain, concentrated on a terrace overlooking the river and floodplain to the south.

4. Discuss any natural landscapes within the site that support representative examples of important, landscape-scale ecological functions (flooding, fire, sand transport, sediment trapping, etc.).

The site is located at a sharp bend of the San Gabriel River as it enters San Gabriel Canyon. Much of the site is located within the 100 year flood plain as defined by FEMA, supporting periodic natural flooding. If the site is acquired native, flood associated habitat will be restored in the floodplain with limited public access.

Fire represents a powerful ecological process in the mountains surrounding this site, as experienced this fall by the Curve and Williams Fire in which over 50,000 acres of nearby land in Angeles National Forest burned. This site, however, located directly adjacent to the river, does not support a fire dependant ecological regime.

Sand transport and sediment trapping have been severely altered along the length of the San Gabriel River. The presence of three upstream dams, Cogswell, San Gabriel and Morris Dams impede the natural sediment transport process that would have once affected the site. Downstream drop structures and dams further disrupt natural sediment processes. Nonetheless, the natural curve of the river does induce erosion and deposition action along the river banks.

A2. Diversity of species and habitat types (70)

1. Does the site possess any:

- i. Areas of unique ecological and/or biological diversity?**
- ii. Vegetated complexity whether horizontally or vertically?**

This site supports high quality native riparian vegetation. The mix of deciduous trees, predominantly western sycamore, *Platanus racemosa* and willow, *Salix spp.*, and scrub

understory along the river edges, provide vertical complexity and can support critical wildlife resources such as nesting areas, foraging habitat and cover for wildlife. This habitat is also special due to the relative absence of many of invasive exotic species such as giant reed, *Arundo donax*, and castor bean, *Ricinus communis*, that are common to so many of our southern California riparian areas.

San Gabriel Canyon contains one of the largest remaining remnants in the region of Riversidian coastal sage scrub community. This association is found in undisturbed areas that support periodic flooding. Once occurring at the base of mountain ranges in southern California from Los Angeles to Riverside Counties, it is now confined to remnant patches along unaltered streams and washes and is considered to be rare and threatened by resource agencies. Much of the site outside of the river corridor is devoid of native vegetation due to residential development and equestrian activities. If the site is acquired, this rare habitat can be expanded.

2. Describe habitat components including year-round availability of water, adequate nesting/denning areas, food sources, etc..

Water is available intermittently at the site year-round from the San Gabriel River depending on release schedules from the upstream San Gabriel and Morris Dams. All of the water is adjudicated in the San Gabriel River and water releases are dependant on water demand. Even so, water flows through the site regularly and during all months of the year.

The vertical diversity of the native riparian vegetation at the site provides resources for nesting, foraging and cover for numerous native wildlife species.

3. Describe any superior representative examples of specific species or habitats.

The native riparian habitat on the site is a superior representative example of riparian habitat due to the relative scarcity of invasive exotic species so common to southern California's riparian habitats.

4. Does the site contain a high number of species and habitat types? List and describe.

This site does not contain either a particularly high number of species or habitat types. The diversity of the native riparian habitat is typical of other areas along the San Gabriel River with the noted absence of many exotic invasive species.

5. Does the site contain populations of native species that exhibit important subspecies or genetic varieties historically present prior to European immigration?

This area has experienced sufficient disturbance to make the presence of undiluted important subspecies or genetic varieties historically present prior to European immigrations unlikely.

A3. Ecological importance of species and habitat types (100)

1. Discuss the significance of habitat types at this location and include any local, regional or statewide benefits received by preserving or improving the area.

This site supports high quality native riparian vegetation. The mix of deciduous trees, predominantly western sycamore, *Platanus racemosa* and willow, *Salix spp.*, and scrub understory along the river edges, provide vertical complexity and support critical wildlife resources such as nesting areas, foraging habitat and cover for wildlife. This habitat is also special due to the relative absence of many of invasive exotic species such as giant reed, *Arundo donax*, and castor bean, *Ricinus communis*, that are common to so many of our local riparian areas. In southern California, where a staggering proportion of our native riparian habitats have been lost and degraded due to channeling and development, the opportunity to preserve intact high quality native riparian habitat provides regional benefits to both native species who will have the opportunity to continue utilizing these valuable resources and humans who have the opportunity to experience the area.

San Gabriel Canyon contains one of the largest remaining remnants in the region of Riversidian coastal sage scrub community. This association is found only in undisturbed areas that support periodic flooding. Once occurring at the base of mountain ranges in southern California from Los Angeles to Riverside Counties, it is now confined to remnant patches along unaltered streams and washes and is considered to be rare and threatened by resource agencies. Much of the site outside of the river corridor is devoid of native vegetation due to residential development and equestrian activities. If the site is acquired, this rare habitat can be expanded onto the floodplain portions the site through restoration. Expansion and restoration of this significantly impacted habitat type has regional and statewide benefits of increasing a highly impacted and very rare habitat.

2. Does the site contain any significant wintering, breeding or nesting areas? Does it fall within any established migratory corridors? What is the level of significance? How are these affected by the project?

Although no nesting or breeding sites have been documented on the site, the high quality riparian habitat of the site has the potential to support such activities in the future. Restoration at the site will increase these opportunities in the future.

3. Describe any existing habitats that support sensitive, rare, “keystone” or declining species with known highly restricted distributions on the region or state. Does the site contain any designated critical habitat? How are these affected by the project?

No sensitive, rare or declining species have been documented on this site; however, known populations of sensitive species were documented on the adjacent Mountain Cove property, which is current being developed as high end housing. These species are numerous and include western pond turtle, *Clemmys marmorata*, San Diego horned lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*, coast range newt, *Taricha torosa torosa*,

arroyo southwestern toad, *Bufo microscaphus californicus*, sharp-shinned hawk, *Accipiter striatus*, and golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos* (Mountain Cove Residential Development Draft Environmental Impact Report, 1999). The protection and restoration of this site could provide refuge for populations displaced by the Mountain Cove Development.

4. What is the amount of shaded riverine aquatic (SRA) and riparian habitat to be developed, restored or preserved?

In addition to the 14 acre conservation easement that would be part of this acquisition, approximately five and one half acres of riparian habitat would be preserved and managed for long term sustainability by this project.

A4. Public benefits accrued from expected habitat improvements (60)

1. Describe present public use/access, if any. For instance, does or will the public have access for the purpose of wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, photography, picnics, etc.

There are many unique and innovative aspects to the proposed River Wilderness Park. The goal is to offer a destination spot where school children, business people, scouts and others can enjoy the natural state of the river without traveling a great distance outside the city. The focus will be on offering an educational component to educate visitors on the area's watershed; ecological, biological, geological resources in an outdoor, natural environment. General care and respect of the environment will also be emphasized. Native vegetation will be planted throughout the park, creating habitat opportunities for insects, birds, and small mammals. Pathways will meander through the floodplain corridor, with interpretive signage to educate visitors on the variety of habitats, while at the same time providing outdoor space to sit, relax, and picnic. The River Park will feature bilingual exhibits to accommodate the estimated 60% visiting public that speaks only Spanish. Currently, the property is privately owned, and there is no access to the site.

2. Discuss areas on the site that are critical for successfully implementing landscape or regional conservation plans. How will the project help to successfully implement the plans?

Acquiring and preserving this property is crucial to a multitude of open space plans. The City of Azusa is in the process of updating its General Plan. The open space component of the new General Plan will include concepts and ideas to preserve the foothills and river, making Azusa a place where nature and city merge. This vision includes establishing a network of hiking trails, creating pocket parks in available open space, developing and maximizing public access points, and restoring natural habitat.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is developing a San Gabriel River Master Plan. The vision is that the San Gabriel River will be the corridor of an integrated

watershed system while providing protection, benefit, and enjoyment to the public. The goal of the Los Angeles County Master Plan includes preserving and enhancing habitat systems through public education, connectivity of the floodplain, and balance with other uses. The River Wilderness Park supports this goal.

The USDA Forest Service is revising its Land and Resources Management Plans, including the San Gabriel Canyon and Mountain Master Plan. This Master Plan describes the intended management of the Angeles National Forests, including management direction for species and habitat protection, trail access, scenic river designations, and communication sites. If granted, the River Wilderness Park will satisfy all conditions of the USDA Forest Service Management Plan.

3. Describe the surrounding vicinity. Include the presence or absence of large urban areas, rapidly developing areas, and adjacent disturbed areas with non-native vegetation and other anthropogenic features. Do any surrounding areas detract from habitat values on the site?

The location of the Azusa River Wilderness Park is ideal. The 210 Foothill Freeway provides regional access and State Highway 39, also known as Azusa Avenue/San Gabriel Canyon Road, provides a direct route into the San Gabriel Canyon. The River Wilderness Park would be situated right off of Highway 39, at the north end of the City of Azusa. This site is the physical entrance to San Gabriel Canyon and is also adjacent to the Angeles National Forest and the San Gabriel River. The San Gabriel Canyon has a regional draw, as visitors from the entire Los Angeles basin seek refuge from the urban environment. As the gateway to the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Canyon receives over seven million visitors annually. This number rivals the amount of annual visitors to Yosemite National Park. Heavy use occurs primarily on the weekends and holidays. In addition to serving the residents of Azusa, the River Wilderness Park will provide many benefits to neighboring communities, Los Angeles County, and the entire southern California region. Los Angeles County will benefit by obtaining a public access point for visitors to learn to respect and value the river, the canyon, and the entire watershed. As the population of southern California continues to grow, the need for public open space becomes increasingly important. With urban sprawl being a dominant feature in the region, the planting, preservation, and restoration of native habitat is a benefit to flora, fauna, humans and the environment. See Geographical Area Map.

West of the proposed project site sits a new residential development, called Mountain Cove. This development has changed the character of the gateway area of the San Gabriel Canyon. However, the proposed River Wilderness Park contains a conservation easement, granted by the California Department of Fish and Game, which dictates that 14 acres of open space be preserved in perpetuity with Riversidian alluvial sage scrub and riparian habitat.

4. Describe compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Immediately adjacent to this proposed acquisition on the west side is the Mountain Cove housing development, consisting of 350 single-family homes. A River Wilderness Park would provide a great open space opportunity for neighbors to enjoy. On the east side, there is a 1.8-acre parcel that the City of Azusa purchased in 2002 with grant funds from the RMC for the purpose of preserving river corridor open space. Also on the east side of the proposed River Park is an 18-acre horse ranch, known as Rainbow Canyon Ranch. To the south lie two parcels that the City of Azusa is looking to acquire for open space preservation. All adjacent land uses are compatible with this proposal. See letters of support.

A5. Viability/sustainability of habitat improvements (40)

1. Describe any future operation, maintenance and monitoring activities for the site. How would these activities affect habitat values?

Acquisition of this site is part of a larger plan by the City of Azusa to acquire and preserve parcels at the canyon mouth for the formation of the proposed Azusa Canyon River Park. Once acquisition has been completed, a master plan including extensive restoration will be completed. The park is envisioned as a largely natural park, with the floodplain preserved and restored for limited, reservation-based wilderness camping. Public park facilities will be located well outside of the floodplain, concentrated on a previously developed terrace overlooking the river and floodplain to the south.

Planning for and development of the area as a natural park will provide a on going monitoring and maintenance framework for the site by the City of Azusa through the regular presence of park rangers and maintenance workers. Habitat values will be preserved in the park by concentrating human activity on previously developed areas outside of the floodplain, while allowing only limited access to the restored floodplain habitat.

2. Does the site contain large areas of native vegetation or is it adjacent to large protected natural areas or other natural landscapes (for example, a lager stand of blue-oak woodland adjacent to public land)?

The site represents a small parcel of land surrounded by larger areas of protected habitat. The acquisition and preservation of this area can allow for continued movement of species between these habitats.

The site lies along the southern edge of the extensive habitat of the San Gabriel Mountains within Angeles National Forest. The Pasadena Water Department owns two large parcels of adjacent land, which it preserves as native habitat for water quality. A portion of the site itself includes a recently established 14 acre California Department of Fish and Game conservation easement along the San Gabriel River. A binding agreement

is in place to further expand this conservation easement past the site southwest along the river by the year 2005.

3. Is the watershed upstream of the site relatively undisturbed or undeveloped and likely to remain so into the foreseeable future? Describe its condition.

The watershed upstream of the site is almost entirely protected within Angeles National Forest, and is thus very likely to remain undeveloped and undisturbed. The upstream forks of the San Gabriel River are both beautiful and wild until the river reaches the three upstream dams, Cogswell, San Gabriel and Morris, which are existing disturbances within the upper watershed. Additional dams are unlikely, but some future disturbances can be expected due to the yet determined dam sediment removal process, depending on technique chosen. Still, the river downstream of the dams and upstream of the sites remains unchannelized and free flowing.

4. Describe any populations of native species or stands of native habitats that show representative environmental settings, such as soil, elevations, geographic extremes, or climatic conditions (for example, the wettest or most northerly location of a species within the state)?

No known representative environmental settings have been documented for this site.

B. Agricultural Land Conservation Benefits

There are no agricultural land conservation benefits associated with this project proposal.

VI. Miscellaneous Benefits and Quality of Proposal

A. Size of request, other contributions, number of persons benefiting, cost of grant per benefited person (40)

Estimated Total Project Cost	<u>\$4,918,000.00</u>	Entire 88-acre River Park
Amount of FPCP Grant Funds Requested	<u>\$2,200,000.00</u>	
Amount of Local Funds Contributed	<u>\$418,000.00</u>	City of Azusa owned parcel, purchased in 2002 through grant funds from the San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
Amount of In-kind Contributions	<u>\$20,000.00</u>	Rio San Gabriel Project Vision Plan match
Additional Funding Sources	<u>\$500,000.00</u>	San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
Number of persons expected to benefit	<u>4.9 million</u>	
Flood Protection Corridor Funds per person benefited*	<u>\$.45</u>	

(*Count as beneficiaries those receiving flood benefits, recreational users of habitat areas protected by the Project, and consumers of food products from agricultural areas conserved by the Project.)

B. Quality of effects on water supply or water quality (90)

1. Will water stored by the project provide for any conjunctive use, groundwater recharge, or water supply benefit?

No water will be stored on site as a result of this project. The San Gabriel River, through San Gabriel Canyon, does provide a unique water story. Every drop of water in the San Gabriel River water system is fully adjudicated as a result of a 1973 stipulated congressional judgement (San Gabriel River Water Committee, 2000). The controlled water flows that traverse the property are designated for public use, but not collected on site. Two settling basins are located downstream from the proposed River Wilderness Park where water is collected, filtered down into the groundwater table, and stored as groundwater. From these settling basins, water is pumped, treated, and sold to various San Gabriel Valley utility companies for eventual use for human consumption. If this proposal is not funded, the property could potentially be developed, creating a threat to the quality of the region's drinking water. Creation of the River Wilderness Park, with its restoration emphasis, will provide a natural filter for water as it percolates down to the groundwater.

2. Does the project fence cattle out?

There are no cattle associated with this project.

3. Does the project pass water over newly developed fresh water marsh?

There are no fresh water marshes associated with this project.

4. Does the project trap sediments?

Sediment will be trapped naturally as the regulated flows of the San Gabriel River meander through the River Wilderness Park. Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) owns and operates a series of three dams north of the River Wilderness Park. DPW is developing a Sediment Management Plan to handle sediment removal behind all three dams. On site, a minimal amount of sedimentation will occur naturally.

C. Quality of impact on underrepresented populations or historic or cultural resources(60)

1. Does the project benefit underrepresented populations? Explain.

According to U.S. Census Bureau 2000 statistics, the ethnic breakdown of the City of Azusa is 53% Hispanic, 38% White, and 9% Other. Median household income is \$31,889 and median home price is \$150,000.

Like most cities in Los Angeles County, Azusa is "park poor". According to a national recommendation for open space, 4 acres of open space is needed per 1000 residents to

sustain a healthy environment (US Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis, Environmental Roundtable 2002). Currently, Azusa has 51 acres of city owned developed parkland for its 47,000 residents.

2. Are historical or cultural resources impacted by the project? Explain

There are no local or state designated historic or cultural resources impacted by this project. However, adjacent to the proposed acquisition parcel is a 1.8-acre parcel recently purchased by the City of Azusa with grant funding from the RMC. On this 1.8-acre site sits the 1923 home of former Mayor of Azusa, Charlie Howard. Mr. Howard served as Mayor of Azusa from May 1926 to November 1928 and was instrumental in establishing the downtown civic center buildings of Azusa. His name is on the cornerstone of Azusa City Hall. He also operated a prosperous automotive business in town for over forty years. This 1.8-acre site will be combined with the proposed acquisition parcel to create the Azusa River Wilderness Park.

D. Technical and fiscal capability of the project team (60)

1. Does the project require scientific or technical expertise, and if so, is it provided for in the grant proposal?

Creation of the Azusa River Wilderness Park at this point is purely acquisition, so no scientific or technical expertise is required at this stage. Eventually, as River Park plans are developed, the expertise of a hydrologist, ecologist, and landscape architect will be required. The City of Azusa will be applying for Proposition 40 grant funds through the RMC to cover the costs of hiring these experts.

2. Grant funds will be available in phases. What monitoring and reporting mechanisms are built into your administrative plan to track progress, initiation, and completion of successive phases?

The City of Azusa has hired a River Coordinator to manage all river-related projects. One of the responsibilities delegated to the River Coordinator is that of grant management. To date, the City of Azusa has received Proposition A funds from Los Angeles County and land acquisition funds from the RMC. The River Coordinator works with city staff to track progress and follow all river restoration projects through to fruition.

3. Please outline your team's management, fiscal and technical capability to effectively carry out your proposal. Mention any previous or ongoing grant management experience you have.

The City of Azusa, as part of its staff, has a full-time arborist, an open space planning consultant, a native vegetation advisory panel, a grant writer, a River Projects Coordinator, an organized group of volunteers called "The Saturday Morning Tree Planting Club", along with an entire public works department. To date the City has

received \$1.7 million in grant funding to apply towards its Rio San Gabriel River restoration efforts. In 1992, the City was awarded \$350,000 from Los Angeles County Proposition A funds for the design/construction of the San Gabriel River Regional Bike Path extension. In 2001, the City was granted \$1 million from the RMC for acquisition of River Park land. In 2002, the City was granted another \$350,000 for design and implementation of a native plant garden around the new USDA Forest Service Education Center and Gateway Interpretive Park. The City has met all grant requirements and is bringing all projects to fruition.

E. Coordination and cooperation with other projects, partner agencies, and affected organizations, and individuals (80)

1. List cost sharing and in-kind partners and any other stakeholders involved with your project and indicate the nature of their contribution, if any. Address the team's ability to leverage outside funds.

The City of Azusa has partnered with the following agencies to develop, construct, and maintain the Azusa River Wilderness Park at the mouth of the San Gabriel Canyon:

- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy - \$1 million grant for river land acquisition/preservation, coordination of regional planning efforts. Belinda Faustinos, Executive Director (626) 458-4315
- USDA Forest Service, San Gabriel River Ranger District – Landscape design, outdoor educational programs, employment of at-risk youth. Marty Dumpis, District Ranger (626) 335-1251
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, San Gabriel River Master Plan – Regional planning, design concepts. Scott Schales, Civil Engineer, (626) 458-4119
- North East Trees, a non-profit urban forestry organization – Technical expertise, landscape architectural services, project management, volunteer coordination, employment of at-risk youth. Claire Robinson, Executive Director (323) 441-8634
- San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy – Planning and design, grant writing, community outreach, technical support. Ann Croissant, President (626) 335-1771
- San Gabriel River Water Committee, purveyors of San Gabriel River water – Water quality/water supply consulting. Don Berry, Administrator (626) 815-0018
- Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter, San Gabriel Valley Task Force – Planning support from the San Gabriel River chapter wide campaign. Jeff Yann, President (626) 968-4572
- El Natio Growers, Growers of quality plants for the California Landscapes – Native plant restoration consultants. James Campbell, Director (626) 969-8449

The City of Azusa will continue to seek grant funding as projects develop over time.

2. Does your project overlap with or complement ongoing activities being carried out by others (such as CALFED, the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study, the Delta levee program, local floodplain management programs, the Reclamation Board's Designated Floodway program, or a multiple objective regional or watershed plan)? If so, indicate any coordination that has taken place to date or is scheduled to take place in the future.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is developing a San Gabriel River Master Plan. The vision is that the San Gabriel River will be the corridor of an integrated watershed system while providing protection, benefit, and enjoyment to the public. The goal of the Los Angeles County Master Plan includes preserving and enhancing habitat systems through public education, connectivity of the floodplain, and balance with other uses. Azusa has defined itself a regional river restoration leader, through coordination of projects.

The USDA Forest Service is revising its Land and Resources Management Plans, including the San Gabriel Canyon and Mountain Master Plan. This Master Plan describes the intended management of the Angeles National Forests, including management direction for species and habitat protection, trail access, scenic river designations, and communication sites. If granted, the River Wilderness Park will satisfy all conditions of the Open Space Master Plans mentioned above. Azusa is working closely with USDA Forest Service, on several levels, to restore and reconnect with the San Gabriel River watershed. The City is constructing a new education center/gateway interpretive garden to house the USDA Forest Service at the entrance to San Gabriel Canyon/Angeles National Forest. The City and USDA Forest Service have also partnered to create Think River!, an annual educational event along the San Gabriel River, with the goal to educate the USDA Forest visitor on the importance of respecting river and canyon lands. If granted, the River Wilderness Park will satisfy all conditions of the USDA Forest Service Management Plan.

3. Will this application, if approved, begin the next phase of a previously approved project or advance an ongoing project substantially toward completion?

This project will most definitely begin the next phase of the newly created Azusa River Wilderness Park. The City purchased 1.8 acres of River Park land in 2002 with grant funds from the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The goal is to create an 88-acre park, and the Flood Protection Corridor Program funds will allow the acquisition and preservation of the next crucial 26-acre parcel. This is a substantial addition to the existing 1.8-acre parcel, and will boost the project to completion. This project is consistent with all local and regional planning boards.

4. Describe how the proposal demonstrates a coordinated approach among affected landowners, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. If other entities are affected, is there written support for the proposal and a willingness to cooperate?

Attached are 4 letters of support for the project, from various stakeholders.